



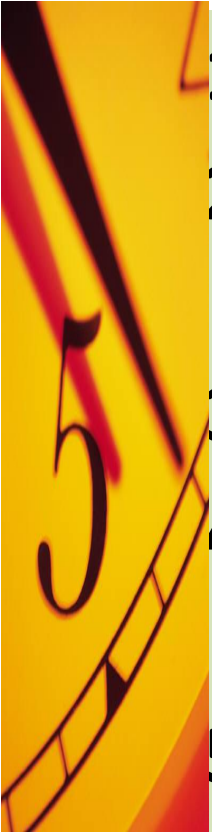
National Organic Program

Steps to Organic Certification





Five Steps to Certification

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- A decorative graphic on the left side of the list, featuring a yellow and orange background with a stylized, curved line and a small black shape resembling a musical note or a leaf.
1. Application
 2. Review and approval of Organic System Plan (OSP)
 3. Inspection
 4. Evaluation of inspection report – recommendation for certification
 5. Certification decision



Step 1: Application

The Operation's Application includes:

- Organic System Plan
- Operator Agreement
- Producers – maps, land history
- Handlers – formulas, labels





The Organic System Plan (OSP)

- a. Description of practices and procedures;
- b. List of all substances used;
- c. Description of monitoring practices & procedures;
- d. Recordkeeping system;
- e. Management practices to prevent commingling and contamination;
- f. Other information deemed necessary by the certifier



Step 2: Certifier Reviews Application

1. Is the application complete?
2. Have the immediate areas needing attention been identified?
3. Does it appear that the applicant complies with the organic standards?
4. Is the farm/business licensed to operate?
What is the operation's legal status?



The
Inspection

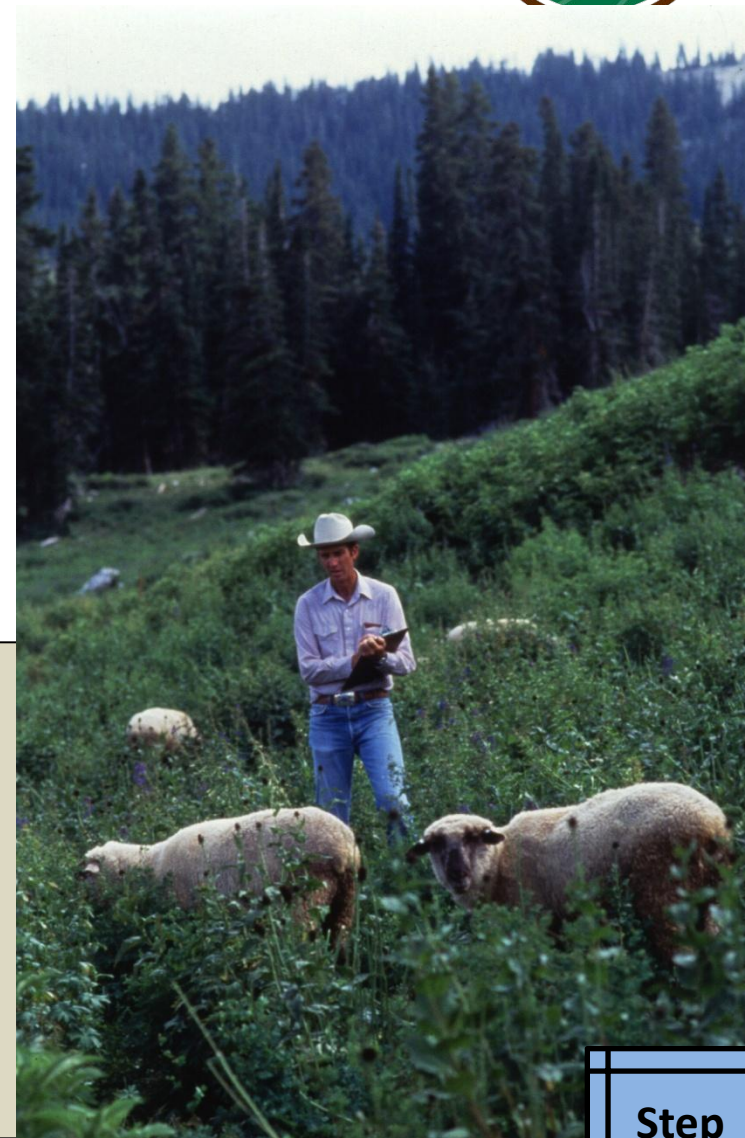
Step 3: The Inspection



The
Inspection

The Inspection

- If the application and OSP are judged to be complete the certifier assigns an organic inspector to inspect all relevant areas of the farm.
- The inspector looks for all indications that the producer is operating according to their OSP and is in compliance to the NOP standards.





The
Inspection

On- Site Inspection

Components of the Inspection

Inspectors role is to verify compliance with organic standards and identify violations or non-compliances.

**Beginning
Meeting**

**Farm/Facility
Tour to Verify
Plan**

**Review
Records and
Conduct
Audit**

Exit Interview

Organic inspections are usually between 3-6 hours per operation depending on complexity of operation and preparation of operator

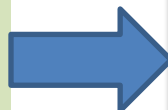




evaluation

Step 4: Evaluation and Recommendation for Approval

The OSP, application and inspection report are all reviewed by an individual or certification committee with expertise in organic production and certification standards.



Inspector of operation cannot make the certification decision
Inspectors may conduct reviews of operations that they did not inspect.



Step 5: The Certification Decision

For New Applicants:

- Approval for organic certification
 - May include conditions for minor, non-violative issues (establishment of adequate buffers, development of compliant labels).
- Request for additional information
 - Inspector identified the need for additional information
- Notice of noncompliance
- Denial of Certification (must be preceded by a Notice of Noncompliance or be a combined Notice of Noncompliance and Notice of Denial)



Step 5: The Certification Decision

Renewal of certification -

- Continuation of organic certification
 - May include request for additional information within a prescribed time frame. If additional information is not received it should lead to a Notice of Noncompliance.
- Request for additional information prior to issuing an updated certificate
- Notice of Noncompliance
- Notice of Proposed Suspension or Revocation (must be preceded by a Notice of Noncompliance or be a combined Notice of Noncompliance and Notice of Proposed Suspension or Revocation)



Examples of situations that would require immediate notification to the certifier

- Operator wants to remove a site or a portion of a site from organic production.
- Operator would like to develop a new label for an organic products.
- Operator wants to purchase organic crops or products from other producers to resell.
- Operator wants to start processing organic food products or handle organic products produced by other organic producers;
- Operator decides to change any portion of a certified operation that may affect compliance with the National Organic Standards.